

# Sherman Creek Wildlife Area

## 2021-2022 Management Plan Update



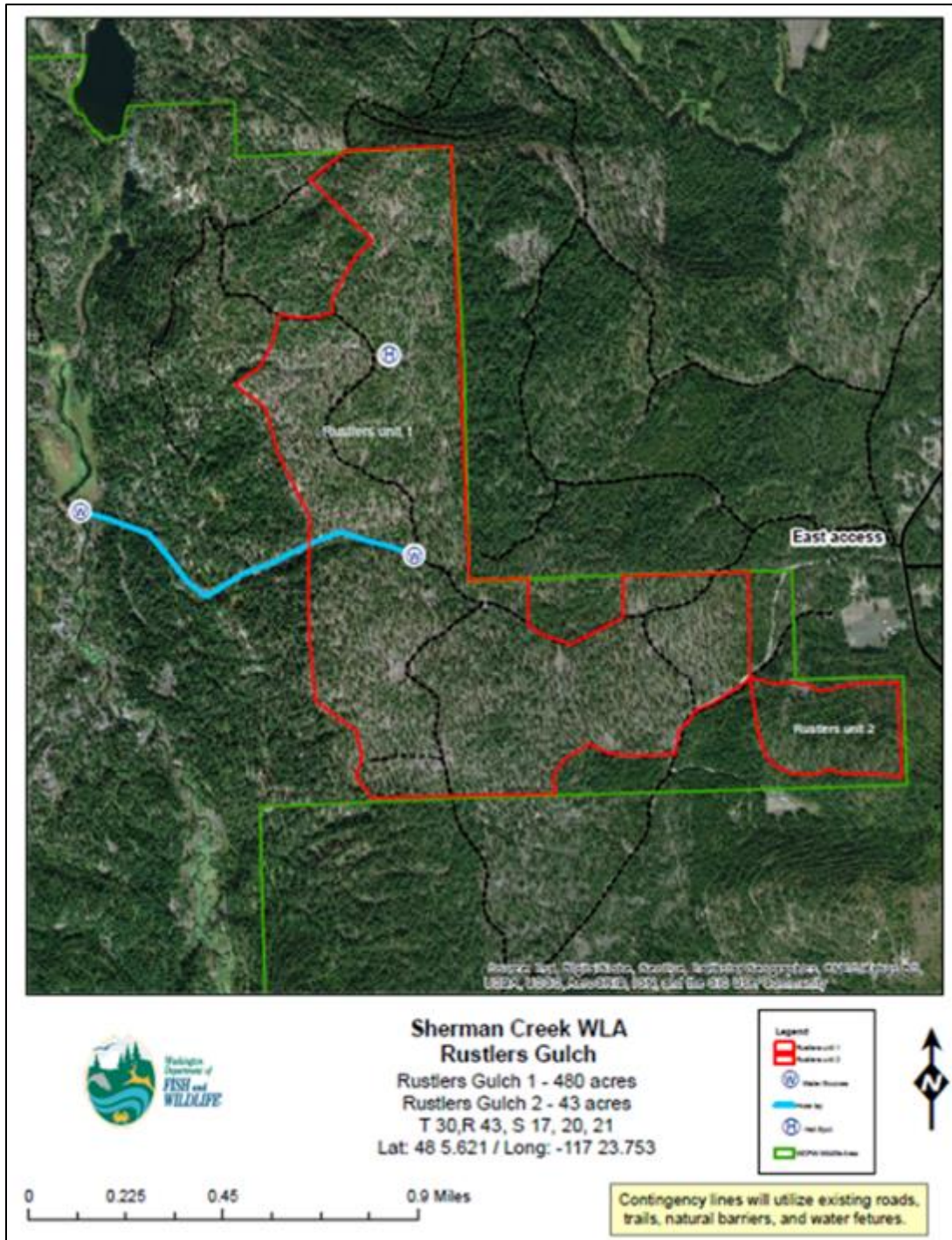
*Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area - part of Sherman Creek Wildlife Area*

This document is intended to highlight accomplishments during calendar years 2021 and 2022, as they relate to goals and objectives identified within the [Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Management Plan](#) (including Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area), and [LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area Management Plan](#). The plan addresses the status of wildlife species and their habitat, ongoing restoration efforts and public recreation opportunities at the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. Every 10 years, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) develops a process for revising the management plans for each wildlife area to identify new management priorities and actions. In between plan revisions, the update focuses on recent accomplishments over the last two years.

## Management Highlights

**New Target Shooting Rule Adopted (Goal #4)**

WDFW adopted new target shooting rules on Jan. 18, 2021, to provide more direction to target shooters to increase safe practices. Several sign boards were installed around the wildlife areas with new target shooting signage and pamphlets posted.



Forest

*East side of Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area. Burning is planned for red-outlined areas south of the blue line. Burning is completed for red-outlined area north of the blue line.*

**Health & Habitat**

### **Improvement Prescribed Burning (Goal #1)**

Prescribed burning plans remain in place for ponderosa pine forests on the east side of Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area. This work will restore and maintain priority habitats by thinning out overstocked small and undesirable tree species, providing for healthy and diverse fish and wildlife populations. For example, these fire-dependent ponderosa pine forests serve as winter range for wild ungulate species. A 53-acre portion just to the north was treated with prescribed fire in spring 2021. Approximately 50 to 250 acres were planned for burning in October 2023, weather permitting.

### **ADA Hunter Platform (Goal #3)**

Inland Northwest Wildlife Council members added a roof to the disabled hunter platform located near the Pruffer Barn, located in the southwest portion of Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area. The protection from rain and sun provided by the roof helps those disabled users with thermo-regulation issues.



*Newly roofed hunter platform, Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area.*

### **Trail Maintenance (Goal #3)**

Wildlife area staff used Sherman Creek Wildlife Area's mini-excavator, tractor, and additional small equipment on Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area trails to cut back encroaching brush. Trails near the Beaver Creek Trailhead were the top priority. Staff also cleared roads, trails, and the water diversion access route on Sherman Creek Wildlife Area.



*Mini excavator and tractor work to clear a diversion ditch.*

## **New Issues**

### **Trail Water Crossing Project (Goals #1 and #3)**

Wildlife area staff are working with WDFW Habitat Biologists and Engineers to address a water crossing issue on a trail in the northwest portion of Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area. Habitat Engineers recommend installing a round culvert at the site and drew up the plans for the project. Habitat Biologists are working with Pend Oreille County and WDFW's State Environmental Policy Act Coordinator to determine what permits will be needed. Installation is expected to occur in 2024.



*Site for future culvert on Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area.*